POPULATION TODAY

Vol. 16, No. 12 December 1988

FEATURES

3 The UN revises its world population projections
A quarter-billion more than projected seen by 2025, based on higher fertility in China and India; new methodology now in use

4 Congress leaves town, John G. Keane to follow
The 100th Congress passed a foreign assistance bill (which President Reagan signed) and authorized new 1990 Census questions (which he vetoed)

4 Call for PRB Visiting Scholar

5 Controversy in France
Protests temporarily halt production of the abortion-inducing pill RU 486

5 PRB Awards Dinner
Barabba explains the "CIO"; Bouvier honored

12 Togo—small nation, high fertility
With economic growth slowing in the 1980s, this West African country's leaders see national development threatened by population increase

1988 Annual Index begins on page 6

DEPARTMENTS

2 From the editor's desk

2 Speaking graphically

9 Population update

11 Current readings

12 Spotlight (Togo)

China and India (pictured) show higher-than-expected fertility. (See page 3)

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

In projections, fertility may not be everything, but it's hard to have a future population without it.

The latest UN Assessment (see article on facing page) shows a significant upturn in world population totals compared to the Assessment made in 1984. This is due in large part to the UN's new assumptions about the future total fertility rates (TFRs) of China and India.

Some adjustment was clearly necessary, because actual fertility figures, based on the most recent information, were beginning to show TFRs higher than those posited by most population specialists.

The graphs below plot the old and new Assessments for China and India. In both cases the 1988 Assessment shows TFRs now that are higher than what was expected back in 1984. According to this latest projection, China's TFR will eventually cross paths with its 1984 predecessor sometime around 2005. (According to the projection, though, China's TFR will remain there, at a below-replacement level, instead of rebounding slightly, as was assumed in 1984.)

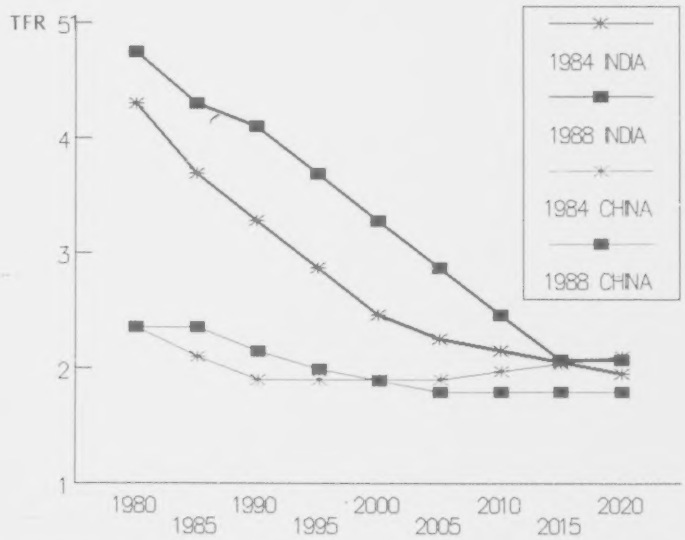
Likewise, India's new projection will catch up with its predecessor, though not until 2015.

Keep in mind that these are projections, not predictions. The main thing to remember is that while most demographers believe that TFRs of most less developed countries will eventually descend to low, industrial-country-type levels, the shape of that descent is a bit more fuzzy. The new Assessment is an early indication that the descent may not be a mathematically smooth and tidy one. How many more people will be born amidst those inevitable zigs and zags is another question.

— Art Haupt

SPEAKING GRAPHICALLY

Projected TFR for India and China From the 1984 and 1988 UN Assessments



Note: TFR (total fertility rate) is the average number of lifetime births per woman.

Source: *World Population Prospects: 1988*, United Nations, forthcoming.

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UN Raises its Global Projections

For the first time in over a decade, the United Nations is significantly expanding its projection of future world population size.

Previously, during the 1980s, the UN's global projections for 2000 and beyond published in its periodic Assessment had been rather stable – based as they were on lower projected growth rates resulting from observed patterns of declining fertility. But in the forthcoming 1988 Assessment – *World Population Prospects: 1988* – the UN's Population Division now projects a world population total of 6.251 billion for 2000.

This represents a notable increase – one-eighth of a billion people – over the 1984 Assessment's 6.122 billion. The change raises the new number for 2000 to essentially the level of the 1973 Assessment, which was 6.254 billion.

The 2025 figure in the new series, 8.467 billion, is also higher than the previous projection's 8.206 billion. (See table below.)

The reasons? Two major contributors to the larger population are China and India. China's birth rate rose in 1986, reversing its much-heralded downward trend. Reflecting that change, the new Assessment now lists a total fertility rate (TFR) of 2.4 lifetime children per woman for China during 1985-1990 rather than the previously assumed 2.1. Likewise, India's TFR for 1985-1990, which had been projected at 3.7 in the earlier Assessment, is now put at 4.3.

These two less developed countries (LDCs) are the two most populous countries on earth; together they contain 37 percent of the world's population, and when they sneeze, demographically speaking, the world catches the proverbial cold.

The Future Is Now

Population growth rates were generally higher during the 1970s. Projections made during that decade took into account falls in LDC fertility that were just beginning, or projected, to occur. On the basis of assumptions made about future declines in fertility, population growth rates were expected to ebb in the then near-future.

We are now living in that future – and in a position to gauge the track record of those projections.

The orthodox assumption was that developing country birth rates would curve downward in a mathematically smooth progression until they reached the lower levels observed in developed nations. Such a pattern can now be discerned in many countries, but other nations have leveled off on their way downward while still others have experienced a (presumably temporary) rise.

India appears to be an example of the former case, China the latter. The UN's Assessment provides a number of scenarios in that two other main series are provided – the "high" and "low" series – in addition to the more frequently cited "medium" series. The full range of world population futures for 2025 presented in the new UN series extends from 7.6 billion up to 9.4 billion.

The new Assessment incorporates several changes in methodology of interest to users. For instance, new life tables allow for higher ceilings on life expectancy at birth, 87.5 years for women and 82.5 for men. Also, given the rapidly increasing availability of data in many developing countries since the 1970s, the Population Division conducted a systematic review to estimate the length of time it might take countries to see their fertility decline to the "two-child family" replacement level. Factors taken into account included: illiteracy of women 20-24, Gross Domestic Product per capita, school enrollment ratios, governments' population policies, family planning practice, and fertility assumptions used in projections prepared by the countries themselves.

For the developed countries, many of whose fertility is already *below* replacement level, the Division now incorporates any available country assumptions into its own. This has led to somewhat lower assumptions on developed country birth rates in many instances.

– C.H.

World Population Prospects: 1988, prepared by the Estimates and Projections Section of the UN Population Division, is expected to be published in the early part of 1989. Summary data are available now in wallchart form: *United Nations World Population Chart 1988*, UN Sales No. E.88XIII.7A. Inquiries may be sent to the Population Division, United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017.

UN Population Assessments, 1984-1988 (Medium Variant)

	1984 Assessment			1988 Assessment		
	(Population in millions)					
Region/Country	1985	2000	2025	1985	2000	2025
World	4,837	6,122	8,206	4,854	6,251	8,467
More Developed Countries	1,174	1,277	1,396	1,174	1,262	1,352
Less Developed Countries	3,663	4,845	6,809	3,680	4,989	7,114
Africa	555	872	1,617	557	872	1,581
Asia	2,818	3,549	4,535	2,834	3,698	4,889
China	1,060	1,256	1,475	1,060	1,286	1,493
India	759	964	1,229	769	1,043	1,446
Latin America	405	546	779	404	540	760
Europe	492	512	524	492	509	512
USSR	279	315	368	277	308	351

Source: *World Population Prospects: 1988* and *World Population Prospects: 1984*, United Nations.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Congress adjourned with a bang Oct. 22, 1988. The propitious status of being the 100th U.S. Congress may have inspired the Senate and House members to rise to new levels of congressional activity. Whatever the reason, this Congress passed all Fiscal Year 1989 appropriations bills even before the end of the fiscal year; authorized major new programs to combat illegal drug traffic and AIDS; reauthorized the National Institutes of Health; and passed numerous other bills, including several related to the 1990 Census.

FY 1989 Appropriations

Congress passed a Foreign Aid Appropriations bill with $198 million for population development assistance (as reported in *PT*, October 1988). The final agreement on this bill provides $500 million for the Special Africa Fund but does not include any funds earmarked for family planning or population programs within this Fund.

The National Institutes of Health, through the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), provides the major source of funds for demographic research. The appropriation for NICHD is $426 million, including funds for AIDS research at the Institute. While this represents a $12 million increase over the President's budget request, the increase is earmarked for new programs. This means that the research program at NICHD, including the demographic and behavioral science program, will have to absorb the following cuts: competing grants (10 percent), noncompeting grants (12 percent), and Centers including Population Research Centers (13-14 percent).

No legislation to extend and revise foreign assistance has passed in the last several years; rather, Congress has appropriated foreign assistance funds as part of continuing resolutions. (When Congressional intent to continue a program is clear, Congress appropriates funds to maintain these initiatives while differences are being resolved in the authorizing legislation.)

A major push to reauthorize the foreign aid program is expected next year. Several recent studies have examined the existing program and recommended new directions. Fresh themes and priorities for the program are emerging: physical well-being, sustainable development, environment and natural resources, urban growth and development.

1990 Census

In a last-minute move, Congress approved legislation requiring the 1990 Census to include an Asian American and Pacific Islander checkoff. The bill also instructed the Secretary of Commerce to include one or more questions related to plumbing on the short form. The long form would request information about heating and cooling.

But as *PT* was going to press, on Nov. 9 President Reagan pocket-vetoed the bill, commenting that the questions would "increase administrative costs and add to the paperwork burden imposed on the public by the census." Office of Management and Budget (OMB) officials had urged the veto, believing that the additions had violated the good-faith compromise which OMB and Congress had previously reached regarding content and respondent burden.

Responsibility for the decennial census itself (now 16 months away) will fall to a new Director of the Bureau of the Census. The present Director, John Keane has announced that he will leave Census in January 1989. Keane, who assumed his post in 1984, is going to Notre Dame University to become Martin G. Gillen Dean of the College of Business Administration. He will also assume the Howard J. and Geraldine F. Korth chair in Strategic Management.

– Nancy McConnell

Nancy McConnell is director of the Washington, D.C., office of the Population Resource Center. The Center monitors legislative issues of concern to the Population Association of America. Neither the Center nor the Association advocates any particular population policy but works to protect funding for quality demographic research.

Call for Visiting Scholar

Applications are invited for the PRB Visiting Scholar Award for the nine-month period beginning September 1989.

The recipient of the Award, made available under a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, will be expected to spend at least nine months at PRB's Washington, D.C. Headquarters carrying out a population-policy-related project of either domestic or international focus. Priority will be given to policy-oriented projects that attempt to synthesize work on a particular topic (including the scholar's own contribution).

The closing date for applications is Feb. 1, 1989. To apply, interested individuals should forward a brief description of their planned activities, together with a curriculum vitae and a sample of recent publications to:

Visiting Scholar Program
Population Reference Bureau, Inc.
777 14th St., N.W. #800
Washington, D.C. 20005

For further information, contact: Bill O'Hare at (202) 639-8040.

RU 486 Turmoil

The abortion-inducing pill, RU 486 (mifepristone), continues to generate new controversy.

On Oct. 26, the French pharmeceutical firm Roussel-Uclaf S.A. announced that it was suspending sales of RU 486 in France.

Ironically, Roussel-Uclaf itself was RU 486's developer. The congestional steroid, administered orally, is considered by some to be the most significant new category of fertility-control drug since oral contraceptives were introduced in the early 1960s.

However, only weeks after the drug's Summer 1988 introduction, the firm withdrew it from the market, citing strong pressure from domestic and foreign right-to-life groups. These included the French political right, which, although relatively small in numbers, is more energetic than its counterparts elsewhere in Europe.

The suspension, however, provoked a prompt counter-outcry from women's groups, family planning organizations, and doctors. Only two days after the suspension, the French government in effect ordered the company to resume sales, "out of concern for the public health and what this pill means for women," according to the Minister of Health. And for several days, abortion was page one news in newspapers around the world.

Developed in France and first tested in 1982, RU 486 works by preventing implantation of the embryo. It does this by preventing progesterone from preparing the lining of the uterus.

It differs from prostaglandins, which are injectables that induce contractions that flush out the uterus and which have been under development since the 1970s.

– A.H.

Note

PRB members: Please note that an insert for *Population Bulletin*, Vol. 43, No. 3, "America's Elderly," is included with the December mailing.

PRB Hosts 1988 Awards Fete

The National Press Club in downtown Washington was the scene Oct. 27 as PRB held its annual Awards Dinner with many of the area's population community in attendance.

Leon F. Bouvier, Adjunct Professor at Old Dominion University and former Vice President of PRB, received the PRB Award for Outstanding Contributions in Communicating Population Information to Policy Audiences. Presenting the Award to Bouvier, Rep. James H. Scheuer (D-N.Y.) praised him for his communication talents, evinced by his early recognition of the importance of applied demography and his instruction of "a whole generation of demographers through the PRB intern program."

Bouvier expressed his pride in the field of demography, commenting how he abhorred bland rubrics such as "population studies" or "population discipline." He urged demographers to enter the policymaking process more boldly. "It can get pretty rough out there," he acknowledged, but "such criticism is worth it if policymakers are informed about demographic shifts."

Vincent P. Barabba, twice Census Bureau Director (1973-1976 and 1979-1981) and now executive director of marketing at General Motors, addressed the audience on the present and future roles of federal statistics. The gap that often separates providers and users needs to be bridged, he said, by involving "users early and in every step of the information-gathering process." In particular, he called for creation of a new class of executive, the "chief information officer." In the mold of CEOs and CFOs, the "CIO" would be responsible for safeguarding the precious information resources of a corporation – or the U.S. Government, for that matter.

Speaker Barabba

Awardee Bouvier

In the federal government, a CIO's role would have considerably greater scope than the Office of Management and Budget's Statistician, as the CIO would have "the authority and responsibility to bring together the providers and users of data."

Why is a CIO necessary? Because greater and more exact use is a necessity, not a luxury. "We're living in an era," Barabba said, "when the margin for error in public or private decision making is smaller than it's ever been."

During the evening's festivities, Martha Phillips, Minority Staff Director of the House Budget Committee and retiring member of PRB's Board of Trustees, was formally added to the roster of PRB Honorary Fellows.

The banquet serves each year as PRB's institutional birthday party. The nonprofit research organization was founded 59 years ago, in 1929, by population specialist Guy Irving Burch.

– A.H.

1988 Subject Index (Volume 16)

ABORTION
RU 486 abortion-inducing drug withdrawn, reintroduced in France (Dec. p. 5)

AFGHANISTAN
Spotlight (May p. 12)

AFRICA
The Circumcision of Women, book review (Nov. p. 11)
Drought, locusts in Africa (Nov. p. 9)

AIDS
National AIDS survey being planned by NCHS (Mar. p. 3)

ALABAMA
Alabama Population Data Sheet (Nov. p. 8)

ALIENS
Immigration door closes after one year (June p. 4)

BABY BOOMERS
Baby boomer movies [From the Editor's Desk] (June p. 2)
Baby boomers dominate the voting-age population [Take a Number] (Mar. p. 10)

BIRTHS
Increasing number of Monday through Friday U.S. births due to cesarian section procedure [Take a Number] (Nov. p. 10)
Foreign-born women bear 13 percent of U.S. babies (Feb. p. 8)
Quebec encouraging births with new cash bonuses (July/Aug. p. 8)

BLACK AMERICANS
The Truly Disadvantaged, book review (Jan. p. 11)

BOOK REVIEWS
Banister, Judith. *China's Changing Population* (Mar. p. 11)
Bongaarts, John, Thomas Burch, and Kenneth Wachter. *Family Demography: Methods and Their Applications* (Mar. p. 11)
Brown, Lester R. ed. *Worldwatch* magazine (June p. 11)
Burtless, Gary, ed. *Work, Health, and Income Among the Elderly* (May p. 11)
Cornia, Giovanni Andrea, Richard Jolly, and Frances Stewart, eds. *Adjustment with a Human Face: Protecting the Vulnerable and Promoting Growth, Vol. 1 (A Study by UNICEF)*, (Oct. p. 11)
Dept. of International Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations. *World Population Policies (Vol. 1)* (Apr. p. 11)
Fornos, Werner. *Gaining People, Losing Ground: A Blueprint for Stabilizing World Population* (Feb. p. 11)
Korean Institute for Population and Health and Taiwan Provincial Institute of Family Planning. *Comparative Study of Fertility Control Experiences in Republic of Korea and Republic of China*, (Apr. p. 11)
Koso-Thomas, Olayinka. *The Circumcision of Women* (Nov. p. 11)
Levy, Frank. *Dollars and Dreams: The Changing American Income Distribution* (July/Aug. p. 11)
Menard, Scott W. and Elizabeth W. Moen, eds. *Perspectives on Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Issues* (Jan. p. 11)
Morrison, Charles E. *Asia-Pacific Report* (Feb. p. 11)
Oxford University Press. *A Social and Economic Atlas of India* (Oct. p. 11)
Ross, John A. and W. Parker Mauldin, eds. *Berelson on Population*, (Sept. p. 11)
United Nations, *World Population Trends and Policies: 1987 Monitoring Report* (Dec. p. 11)
Williams, Robin M. Jr. ed. *Sociological Forum* (June p. 11)
Wilson, William Julius. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Jan. p. 11)
Winch, Donald. *Malthus* (May p. 11)

BURUNDI
Survey Report (Apr. p. 5)

BUSINESS
How population trends affect business (Feb. p. 4)
See *PRB Bulletin: Demographics: People and Markets (published Feb.)*

CAJUNS
Spotlight (June p. 12)

CALIFORNIA
Response to California's confidential marriages [Letter to the Editor] (Jan. p. 10)

CANADA
Canadian data available on diskette (Jan. p. 9)
Decline in the Canadian TFR rekindles their debate about growth, fertility, and immigration [Take a Number] (July/Aug. p. 10)
Quebec encouraging births with new cash bonuses (July/Aug. p. 8)

CENSUS BUREAU
Bill from Dymally to adjust 1990 Census dies (Nov. p. 5)
Bill to change 1990 Census form vetoed [Washington Watch] (Dec. p. 4)
Census Bureau prepares new series of population projections for the USSR [Take a Number] (Sept. p. 10)
Census Bureau releases *The County and City Data Book 1988*, in an assortment of diskette versions [Softwhere] (Oct. p. 9)
Controversy over number adjustment (Jan. p. 4)
Data price increase on hold (Nov. p. 5)
Household formation has changed since 1960 in the U.S. [Take a Number] (Apr. p. 10)
Master address list for the 1990 Census in the works by temporary workers at the Census Bureau [Take a Number] (June p. 10)
New Census Bureau publication explains how questions are selected and tested for decennial census [Take a Number] (Feb. p. 10)

Other PRB Publications

Besides *Population Today*, PRB published the following publications in 1988, which are included in the index below. Entries for them appear in italics (e.g., *See PRB Bulletin*) under the appropriate subject headings.

Data Sheets

1988 World Population Data Sheet April 1988, French and Spanish editions November 1988
The United States Population Data Sheet (seventh edition) September 1988

Population Trends and Public Policy Papers

Number 14: David B. Hill and Mary M. Kent, *Election Demographics*, January 1988

Number 15: William P. O'Hare, *The Rise of Poverty in Rural America*, July 1988

Number 16: Katherine K. Wallman, *Losing Count: The Federal Statistical System*, September 1988

Number 17: Rafael Valdiresio and Cary Davis, *U.S. Hispanics*, December 1988

Occasional Papers

Leon F. Bouvier and Vernon M. Briggs, Jr., *The Population and Labor Force of New York: 1990 to 2050* (September 1988)

Population Bulletins

(reprint January 1988) Thomas W. Merrick et al, *World Population in Transition* (Vol. 41, No. 2)

Thomas W. Merrick and Stephen J. Tordella, *Demographics: People and Markets* (Vol. 43, No.1) February 1988

Peter Hendry, *Food and Population: Beyond Five Billion* (Vol. 43, No. 2) April 1988

Beth J. Soldo and Emily M. Agree, *America's Elderly* (Vol. 43, No. 3) September 1988

John Weeks and Saad Gadalla, *The Demography of Islamic Nations* (Vol. 43, No. 4) December 1988

Population Education

Interchanges

"Demographic Illiteracy," *Interchange* (Vol. 17, No. 1) February 1988
"The Changing Face of America," *Interchange* (Vol. 17, No. 2) May 1988
"Teacher's Guide to *Facts in Focus*," *Interchange* (Vol. 17, No. 3) October 1988
"What is Overpopulation," *Interchange* (Vol. 17, No. 4) December 1988

Population Learning Series

Kimberly Crews and Patricia Cancellier, "U.S. Population: Charting the Change," Student Chartbook, May 1988
Kimberly Crews, "World Population: Facts in Focus," Workbook, October 1988

Metro areas on the rise [Take a Number] (Nov. p. 10)
New York loses Census Bureau case (Jan. p. 4)
Questions for 1990 Census finalized (May p. 4)
State growth patterns shifted a little in 1987 reports Census Bureau (Feb. p. 3)
TIGER file sample available on diskette (Nov. p. 9)
U.S. Hispanic population report available from Census Bureau [Take a Number] (June p. 10)

CHICAGO

Population of Chicago is not growing very quickly [Take A Number](Oct. p. 10)

CHINA

A conversation with the head of China's Family Planning Commission [Demographer's Page] (Jan. p. 6)
China's Changing Population, book review (Mar. p. 11)
China's population trend heads in opposite direction [Take a Number] (Apr. p. 10)
Comparative Study of Fertility Control Experiences in Republic of Korea and Republic of China, book review (Apr. p. 11)
New *Population Atlas of China* published by Oxford University Press (Feb. p. 10)
The People's Republic of China Population Data Sheet published by Peking University and the University of Texas (May p. 5)

COLOMBIA

Colombia reports decline in fertility [Take a Number] (Jan. p. 10)
Survey Report (Mar. p. 5)

CONGRESS

Bill from Dymally to adjust 1990 Census dies (Nov. p. 5)
Bill to change 1990 Census form vetoed [Washington Watch] (Dec. p. 4)
Congressional activity will focus on negotiating appropriation levels for various federal programs (July/Aug. p. 4)
Foreign aid bill to go to President as 100th Congress starts winding down [Washington Watch] (Oct. p. 4)
Reapportionment of the House of Representatives in 1990 [Take a Number] (Mar. p. 10)
U.S. foreign assistance reauthorized (Dec. p. 4)

CONTRACEPTIVES

Fertility and birth control combined on PCC's new wall chart (Jan. p. 8)
Foreign aid bill to go to President as 100th Congress starts winding down [Washington Watch] (Oct. p. 4)
The IUD returns to the U.S. (Jan. p. 4)
Trinidad and Tobago reports on contraceptive methods [Take a Number] (June p. 10)
RU 486 Turmoil (Dec. p. 5)

DATA SHEETS

Gathering data for the *World Population Data Sheet* [From the Editor's Desk] (Apr. p. 2)
Population data, how solid are the numbers? [Demographer's Page] (May p. 6)
The People's Republic of China Population Data Sheet published by Peking University and the University of Texas (May p. 5)
U.S. Data Sheet reflects a decade of shifting regional political strength (July/Aug. p. 3)
World Data Sheet 1988 and *Metro Data Sheet* available on diskette from PRB [Softwhere] (Sept. p. 9)
World Population Data Sheet shows that global population during the late 1980s may be growing faster than expected (May p. 3)
'World Population Facts in Focus' is a workbook designed by PRB to accompany the *World Population Data Sheet* (Oct. p. 10)
See United States Population Data Sheet (seventh edition) (published Sept.)
See PRB 1988 World Population Data Sheet (published April)

"DEMOGRAPHER'S PAGE" (Dept. of PT)

A conversation with the head of China's Family Planning Commission (Jan. p. 6)
Alternative resources for teaching demography (Sept. p. 6)
All about ZIP Codes (Oct. p. 6)
Population data, how solid are the numbers? (May p. 6)
Many of the working poor are unable to break out of poverty (Feb. p. 6)
A tale of two states [Mass. and Utah], (Nov. p. 6)
The beliefs of Moslems affect their demography (Mar. p. 6)
Ultra-low fertility and its consequences (Apr. p. 6)
Using the adjustments of William Brass in estimates of Indonesian fertility (July/Aug. p. 6)

DIVORCE

Collection of marriage and divorce data may be suspended (Feb. p. 4)
Response to Nov. '87 From the Editor's Desk on the value of remarriage rate [Letter to the Editor] (Mar. p. 8)

ELDERLY POPULATION

America's Elderly population is aging and growing (Oct. p. 8)
Average annual growth of elderly population in more developed and less developed countries [Speaking Graphically] (Feb. p. 2)
Work, Health, and Income Among the Elderly, book review (May p. 11)
See PRB Bulletin: America's Elderly (published Sept.)

ELECTIONS

Baby boomers dominate the voting-age population [Take a Number] (Mar. p. 10)
Presidential campaign, candidates, and the issues for 1988 (Oct. p. 3)
Links between demography and U.S. election process explored in *Election Demographics* (Jan. p. 4)

EL SALVADOR

Fertility declines considerably in El Salvador [Take a Number] (Jan. p. 10)
Survey Report (June p. 5)

ENVIRONMENT

Drought in Africa (Nov. p. 9)

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Medical Geography book review (Nov. p. 11)

FAMILY PLANNING

Demographic and Health Surveys from 30 developing countries are released after five years by Westinghouse's Institute for Resource Development (Apr. p. 8)
"Mexico City policy" restricting U.S. family planning assistance dealt setback (Sept. p. 4)

FERTILITY

Fertility and birth control combined on PCC's new wall chart (Jan. p. 8)
U.S. age-specific fertility rates by race, 1970 and 1986 [Speaking Graphically] (Sept. p. 2)
Using the adjustments of William Brass in estimates of Indonesian fertility [Demographer's Page] (July/Aug. p. 6)
Worldwatch reports fertility rates remain high in most less developed countries (Jan. p. 8)

FERTILITY DECLINE

China's Changing Population, book review (Mar. p. 11)
Colombian fertility has dropped by half in less than two decades (Mar. p. 5)
Colombia reports decline in fertility [Take a Number] (Jan. p. 10)
Decline in the Canadian TFR rekindles their debate about growth, fertility, and immigration [Take a Number] (July/Aug. p. 10)
Fertility declines considerably in El Salvador [Take a Number] (Jan. p. 10)
Fertility in the U.S. may be stabilizing [Take a Number] (July/Aug. p. 10)
How low could fertility in West Germany go? [Take a Number] (Apr. p. 10)
Indian officials alarmed at lack of progress in reducing birth rate [Take a Number] (Nov. p. 10)
Moroccan fertility declines [Take a Number] (Jan. p. 10)
Ultra-low fertility and its consequences [Demographer's Page] (Apr. p. 6)
Thailand's fertility dropping to industrialized country levels [survey report] (Nov. p. 3)

FOOD

Malthus, book review (May p. 11)
World food production is rising and population is increasing (Apr. p. 5)
See PRB Bulletin: Food and Population: Beyond Five Billion (published April)
US AID's Famine Early Warning System (Nov. p. 9)

FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

Foreign aid bill to go to President as 100th Congress starts winding down [Washington Watch] (Oct. p. 4)
U.S. foreign assistance reauthorized (Dec. p. 4)

FRANCE

RU 486 abortion-inducing drug withdrawn, reintroduced in France, (Dec. p. 5)
Spotlight (Jan. p. 12)

FRENCH POLYNESIA

Spotlight (July/Aug. p. 12)

GERMANY, WEST

How low could fertility in West Germany go? [Take a Number] (Apr. p. 10)

GHANA

Survey Report (Oct. p. 5)

GUATEMALA

Survey Report (Sept. p. 5)

HISPANICS

Components of the U.S. Hispanic Population [Speaking Graphically] (Oct. p. 2)
The Hispanic Population of the United States book review (Dec. p. 11)
U.S. Hispanic population report available from Census Bureau [Take a Number] (June p. 10)
See Population Trends and Public Policy Paper U.S. Hispanics (published Dec.)

HONG KONG

Hong Kong had the world's highest contraceptive prevalence rates in 1987 [Take a Number] (June p. 10)

HOUSEHOLDS

Household formation has changed since 1960 in the U.S. [Take a Number] (Apr. p. 10)

ICELAND

Icelandic history on the line [Speaking Graphically] (Mar. p. 2)

Continued on next page

IMMIGRATION, U.S.

Current immigration law undergoing new scrutiny (Sept. p. 3)
Immigration door closes after one year (June p. 4)
Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 that altered U.S. immigration policy begins to settle down (Oct. p. 5)
Legal immigration total [Take a Number] (Nov. p. 10)

INCOME

Dollars and Dreams: The Changing American Income Distribution, book review (July/Aug. p. 11)
Is the U.S. middle class vanishing in the 1980s? (Apr. p. 3)
Median income for selected groups of persons 25 years and older [Speaking Graphically] (Apr. p. 2)
Work, Health, and Income Among the Elderly, book review (May p. 11)

INDIA

India Population Data Sheet (Nov. p. 8)
Indian officials alarmed at lack of progress in reducing birth rate [Take a Number] (Nov. p. 10)
Oxford University Press, *A Social and Economic Atlas of India* (Oct. p. 11)

INDONESIA

Using the adjustments of William Brass in estimates of Indonesian fertility [Demographer's Page] (July/Aug. p. 6)

INFANT MORTALITY

Infant mortality below 10 in U.S. [Take a Number] (Nov. p. 10)
Infant mortality declines in the U.S. [Take a Number] (Apr. p. 10)
Infant mortality in the U.S. is higher than in other industrialized nations (Jan. p. 10)

ISLAM

The beliefs of Moslems affect their demography [Demographer's Page] (Mar. p. 6)

JAPAN

Japan's children under 14 less than 20 percent of nation [Take a Number] (Nov. p. 10)

KOREA

Comparative Study of Fertility Control Experiences in Republic of Korea and Republic of China, book review (Apr. p. 11)
Spotlight (Oct. p. 12)

KUWAIT

Spotlight (Feb. p. 12)

LIFE EXPECTANCY

Age-adjusted death rate for U.S. has dropped [From the Editor's Desk] (Feb. p. 2)
Upward trends in life expectancy 1960-1986 [Speaking Graphically] (June p. 2)

MALI

Survey Report (July/Aug. p. 5)

MALAYSIA

Spotlight (Mar. p. 12)

MALTHUSIANISM

Malthus, book review (May p. 11)

MARRIAGE

Collection of marriage and divorce data may be suspended (Feb. p. 4)
Response to California's "confidential marriages" [Letter to the Editor] (Jan. p. 10)
Response to Nov. '87 From the Editor's Desk on the value of remarriage rate [Letter to the Editor] (Mar. p. 8)

MASSACHUSETTS

A tale of two states [Mass. and Utah], [Demographer's Page] (Nov. p. 6)

MIDDLE CLASS

Is the U.S. middle class vanishing in the 1980s? (Apr. p. 3)

MOROCCO

Moroccan fertility declines [Take a Number] (Jan. p. 10)
Survey Report (May p. 5)

MOSLEMS

The beliefs of Moslems affect their demography [Demographer's Page] (Mar. p. 6)

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS (NCHS)

National AIDS survey being planned by NCHS (Mar. p. 3)

NEW ORLEANS

New Orleans hosts PAA's annual meeting (June p. 3)
Spotlight (June p. 12)

NEW YORK

New York loses Census Bureau case (Jan. p. 4)
Population and labor force of New York are changing (Sept. p. 8)
See Occasional Paper: The Population and Labor Force of New York: 1990 to 2050 (published Sept.)

NIGERIA

Nigeria reports TFR [Take a Number] (Jan. p. 10)

OBITUARIES

Michael F. Brewer, PRB trustee dies after a long illness (Sept. p. 5)
Robert J. Lapham, a leading specialist on population and international family planning issues, dies at 58 (Mar. p. 5)

PANAMA

Spotlight (Sept. p. 12)

POLITICS

Congressional activity will focus on negotiating appropriation levels for various federal programs (July/Aug. p. 4)
Foreign aid bill to go to President as 100th Congress starts winding down [Washington Watch] (Oct. p. 4)
Presidential campaign, candidates, and the issues for 1988 (Oct. p. 3)
U.S. Data Sheet reflects a decade of shifting regional political strength (July/Aug. p. 3)

POPULANDIA

Addenda (Dec. p. 10)

POPULATION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (PAA)

New Orleans hosts PAA's annual meeting (June p. 3)

POPULATION DECLINE

Change in Texas population, 1981-1987 [Speaking Graphically] (June p. 2)
State growth patterns shifted a little in 1987 reports Census Bureau (Feb. p. 3)

POPULATION EDUCATION

Alternative resources for teaching demography [Demographer's Page] (Sept. p. 6)
"World Population: Facts in Focus" is a workbook designed by PRB to accompany the *World Population Data Sheet* (Oct. p. 10)
See Population Learning Series: Demographic Illiteracy, Interchange (published Feb.)
See Population Learning Series: Teacher's Guide to Facts in Focus, Interchange (published Oct.)
See Population Learning Series: The Changing Face of America, Interchange (published May).
See Population Learning Series: U.S. Population: Charting the Change, Student Chartbook (published May).
See Population Learning Series: What Is Overpopulation, Interchange (published Dec.)

POPULATION GROWTH

China's population trend heads in opposite direction [Take a Number] (Apr. p. 10)
How population trends affect business (Feb. p. 4)
State growth patterns shifted a little in 1987 reports Census Bureau (Feb. p. 3)
World Bank projects a world population of 10.4 billion in 2100 (Jan. p. 3)
World food production is rising and population is increasing (Apr. p. 5)
World Population Data Sheet shows that global population during the late 1980s may be growing faster than expected (May p. 3)
See Population Learning Series: What Is Overpopulation, Interchange (published Dec.)

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Census Bureau prepares new series of population projections for the USSR (Sept. p. 10)
Latest UN Assessment (Dec. p. 3)
"People" projects populations for several regions and/or subgroups separately (June p. 9)
Population and labor force of New York are changing (Sept. p. 8)
Population data, how solid are the numbers? [Demographer's Page] (May p. 6)
Projecting the USSR's population (Apr. p. 9)
A tale of two states [Mass. and Utah], [Demographer's Page] (Nov. p. 6)
Latest UN assessment figures (Dec. p. 3)
U.S. regional populations 1987 and 2010 [Speaking Graphically] (Apr. p. 2)

POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU, INC.

Annual Awards Dinner (Dec. p. 5)
Answering information requests at PRB [From the Editor's Desk] (May p. 2)
Frey named PRB Visiting Scholar for 1988-1989 (Mar. p. 10)
New membership and publication prices for 1989 (Oct. p. 8)
PRB Readership Survey leads to changes in PRB publications (July/Aug. p. 8)
World Data Sheet 1988 and *Metro Data Sheet* available on diskette from PRB [Softwhere] (Sept. p. 9)

POVERTY

Many of the working poor are unable to break out of poverty [Demographer's Page] (Feb. p. 6)
Rural Americans are in economic trouble in the 1980s (July/Aug. p. 5)
Poverty rate holding steady in the U.S. (Sept. p. 5)

QUEBEC

Quebec encouraging births with new cash bonuses (July/Aug. p. 8)

RU 486

RU 486 abortion-inducing drug withdrawn, reintroduced in France, (Dec. p. 5)

RURAL ISSUES

Rural Americans are in economic trouble in the 1980s (July/Aug. p. 5)
See Population Trends and Public Policy Paper "The Rise of Poverty in Rural America," Number 15 (published July)

RWANDA

Spotlight (Nov. p. 12)

Continued on next page

SENEGAL
Survey Report (Feb. p. 5)

SOCIOLOGY
Sociological Forum, book review (June p. 11)

"SOFTWHERE" (dept. of PT)
As Easy As has Lotus-like capabilities and costs much less (Feb. p. 9)
Canadian data available on diskette (Jan. p. 9)
Census Bureau releases *The County and City Data Book 1988*, in an assortment of diskette versions (Oct. p. 9)
Database program "World" provides basic national data for almost all countries of the world (Mar. p. 9)
Lotus 1-2-3 series, Facts-at Your Fingertips, contains information on U.S. children, youth, and their families (May p. 9)
"PC-GLOBE" and "PC-USA" mapping and database programs are available (July/Aug. p. 9)
"People" projects populations for several regions and/or subgroups separately (June p. 9)
Population data on CD ROMs (Dec. p. 9)
TIGER file sample available on diskette (Nov. p. 9)
U.S. regional populations 1987 and 2010 [Speaking Graphically] (Apr. p. 2)
World Data Sheet 1988 and *Metro Data Sheet* available on diskette from PRB (Sept. p. 9)
"World Development Indicators" consists of economic and social data indicators for countries of the world (Apr. p. 9)

"SPOTLIGHT" (dept. of PT)
Afghanistan (May p. 12)
Cajuns (June p. 12)
France (Jan. p. 12)
French Polynesia (July/Aug. p. 12)
Republic of Korea (Oct. p. 12)
Kuwait (Feb. p. 12)
Malaysia (Mar. p. 12)
Panama (Sept. p. 12)
Rwanda (Nov. p. 12)
Togo (Dec. p. 12)
Zimbabwe (Apr. p. 12)

SRI LANKA
Survey Report (Jan. p. 5)

"SURVEY REPORT" (dept. of PT)
Burundi DHS (Apr. p. 5)
Colombia DHS (Mar. p. 5)
El Salvador DHS (June p. 5)
Ghana DHS (Oct. p. 5)
Guatemala DHS (Sept. p. 5)
Mali DHS (July/Aug. p. 5)
Morocco DHS (May p. 5)
Senegal DHS (Feb. p. 5)
Sri Lanka DHS (Jan. p. 5)
Thailand DHS (Nov. p. 3)

TEXAS
Change in Texas Population, 1981-1987 [Speaking Graphically] (June p. 2)
The People's Republic of China Population Data Sheet published by Peking University and the University of Texas (May p. 5)

THAILAND
Thailand's fertility dropping to industrialized country levels [survey report] (Nov. p. 3)

TOGO
Spotlight (Dec. p. 12)

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
Trinidad and Tobago reports on contraceptive methods used [Take A Number] (June p. 10)

Continued on next page

SOFTWHERE

CD ROM optical disks containing population and economic data are now being produced by software developer Slater Hall Information Products (SHIP). Population data available so far: 1980 Census data consisting of a full range of population and housing characteristics for all places with a population of 10,000 or more, with all data from the Census Bureau Summary Tape file 3-C; county population estimates by age, sex, and race for 1980, 1982, and 1984; local area population and per capita income estimates; and population projections. All of the above data come on one shiny CD ROM disk, which, with the operating software that comes with it, will work with most CD ROM disk drives.

Also included with the SHIP optical disk is Searcher 1.4, a retrieval and data management package that selects and sorts the CD ROM data and creates and exports data to other programs or to a printer.

The price for a SHIP optical disk and Searcher package is $1200. There is a 10-percent discount for educational and nonprofit institutions. Additional CD ROMs with further population data are forthcoming.

To order or to request a demo disk, contact: Slater Hall Information Products, 1522 K St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone (202) 682-1350.

POPULATION UPDATE

Estimated United States Population:

As of September 1, 1988	246,590,000
As of September 1, 1987	244,344,000

The above estimates include armed forces overseas and are from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 1032.

Estimated World Population:

As of December 1988	5,165,000,000
Annual growth	89,000,000

Estimated by extrapolation from the mid-1988 population on PRB's *World Population Data Sheet*.

Latest Provisional Statistics for the U.S.: July 1988

	12 months ending with July					
	Number		Rate			
Item	1988	1987	1988	1987	1986	1985
Live births	3,855,000	3,777,000	15.8	15.6	15.5	15.7
Deaths	2,168,000	2,105,000	8.9	8.7	8.7	8.8
Natural increase	1,687,000	1,672,000	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.9
Marriages	2,361,000	2,440,000	9.6	10.1	10.0	10.3
Divorces	1,156,000	1,165,000	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.9
Infant deaths	38,300	37,900	10.0	10.1	10.6	10.6
Population base (in millions)			244.7	242.4	240.1	237.5

Note. Rates are given per 1,000 population, except for infant deaths, which are given per 1,000 live births.

Source. Monthly Vital Statistics Report (Vol. 37, No. 7) from the National Center for Health Statistics.

UNICEF

Adjustment with a Human Face: Protecting the Vulnerable and Promoting Growth, Vol. 1 (A Study by UNICEF), book review (Oct. p. 11)

UNITED STATES

All about ZIP Codes [Demographer's Page] (Oct. p. 6)
Americans change residence quite often [Take a Number] (Feb. p. 10)
America's Elderly population is aging and growing (Oct. p. 8)
Components of the U.S. Hispanic population [Speaking Graphically] (Oct. p. 2)
Current immigration law undergoing new scrutiny (Sept. p. 3)
Dollars and Dreams: The Changing American Income Distribution, book review (July/Aug. p. 11)
Federal statistical gathering and dissemination diminishes during the 1980s (Sept. p. 4)
Fertility in the U.S. may be stabilizing [Take a Number] (July/Aug. p. 10)
The Hispanic Population of the United States book review (Dec. p. 11)
Household formation has changed since 1960 in the U.S. [Take a Number] (Apr. p. 10)
Households diversify and shrink (Nov. p. 5)
Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 that altered U.S. immigration policy begins to settle down (Oct. p. 5)
Increasing number of Monday through Friday U.S. births due to cesarian section procedure [Take a Number] (Nov. p. 10)
Infant mortality below 10 in U.S. [Take a Number] (Nov. p. 10)
Infant mortality declines in the U.S. [Take a Number] (Apr. p. 10)
Infant mortality in the U.S. is higher than in other industrialized nations (Jan. p. 10)
Is the U.S. middle class vanishing in the 1980s? (Apr. p. 3)
"PC-GLOBE" and "PC-USA" mapping and database programs are available [Softwhere] (July/Aug. p. 9)
Metro areas on the rise [Take a Number] (Nov. p. 10)
See Population Trends and Public Policy Paper: Losing Count: The Federal Statistical System (Number 16) (Published Sept.)
Poverty rate holding steady in the U.S. (Sept. p. 5)
Presidential campaign, candidates, and issues for 1988 (Oct. p. 3)
Rural Americans are in economic trouble in the 1980s (July/Aug. p. 5)
Reapportionment of the House of Representatives in 1990 [Take a Number] (Mar. p. 10)
Questions for 1990 Census finalized (May p. 4)
State growth patterns shifted a little in 1987 reports Census Bureau (Feb. p. 3)
A tale of two states [Mass. and Utah], [Demographer's Page] (Nov. p. 6)
U.S. Data Sheet reflects a decade of shifting regional political strength (July/Aug. p. 3)
See Occasional Paper: The Population and Labor Force of New York: 1990 to 2050 (published Sept.)
See Population Trends and Public Policy Paper "The Rise of Poverty in Rural America," Number 15 (published July)
See Population Trends and Public Policy Paper "Election Demographics," Number 14 (published Jan.)
See Population Learning Series: The Changing Face of America, Interchange (published May).
See Population Learning Series: U.S. Population: Charting the Change, Student Chartbook (published May).
See PRB Bulletin: America's Elderly (published Sept.)
See United States Population Data Sheet (seventh edition) (published Sept.)

USSR

Census Bureau prepares new series of population projections for the USSR [Take a Number] (Sept. p. 10)
Collision between Azeri and Armenian populations highlights *Projecting the USSR's population* (Apr. p. 9)
Soviet ethnic diversity (May p. 4)

UTAH

A tale of two states [Mass. and Utah], [Demographer's Page] (Nov. p. 6)

WESTINGHOUSE INSTITUTE FOR RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (IRD)

Demographic and Health Surveys from 30 developing countries are released after five years by Westinghouse's Institute for Resource Development (Apr. p. 8)
See also "Survey Report"

WOMEN

The Circumcision of Women book review (Nov. p. 11)

WORLD

Commentators express concern about world demographic trends [From the Editor's Desk] (Mar. p. 2)
Database program "World" provides basic national data for almost all countries of the world [Softwhere] (Mar. p. 9)
Gaining People, Losing Ground: A Blueprint for Stabilizing World Population, book review (Feb. p. 11)
Gathering data for the *World Population Data Sheet* [From the Editor's Desk] (Apr. p. 2)
Latest UN assessment figures (Dec. p. 3)
"PC-GLOBE" and "PC-USA" mapping and database programs are available [Softwhere] (July/Aug. p. 9)
Third World's fragile ecology and finances highlighted in Worldwatch Institute report (May p. 9)
World Bank projects a world population of 10.4 billion in 2100 (Jan. p. 3)
"World Development Indicators" consists of economic and social data indicators for countries of the world (Apr. p. 9)
World food production is rising and population is increasing (Apr. p. 5)
World Population Data Sheet available in French and Spanish (Nov. p. 8)
World Population Data Sheet shows that global population during the late 1980s may be growing faster than expected (May p. 3)
"World Population: Facts in Focus" is a workbook designed by PRB to accompany the *World Population Data Sheet* (Oct. p. 10)
Worldwatch magazine, book review (June p. 11)
See PRB 1988 World Population Data Sheet (published April)
See PRB Bulletin: Food and Population: Beyond Five Billion (published April)

WORLD BANK

World Bank projects a world population of 10.4 billion in 2100 (Jan. p. 3)
World Bank's President voices population growth concerns (Nov. p. 4)

ZIMBABWE

Spotlight (Apr. p. 12)

ZIP CODES

All about ZIP Codes [Demographer's Page] (Oct. p. 6)

ADDENDA

Populandia Update

It's now been 11 years since *Population Today*'s mythical island erupted from the Pacific Ocean floor (see *PT*, December 1987 and earlier issues) and became the haven for all the world's natural increase, i.e., the surplus of births over deaths. That means that currently about three out of every four births winds up in Populandia.

As a result, there are now 878,686,740 Populandians on the 400 × 400 square-mile island, which has now passed India to become the second most populous country in the world. The oldest Populandians are now within hailing distance of puberty.

CURRENT READINGS

PRB welcomes materials on population topics for possible inclusion in Current Readings. Publishers may address review copies to Book Review Editor, POPULATION TODAY, Population Reference Bureau, 777 14th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

THE HISPANIC POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, by Frank D. Bean and Marta Tienda. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1988. 456 pages. $42.50 (cloth) ISBN 0-87154-104-1.

Because of high rates of immigration from Latin American countries and a relatively young age structure, Hispanics are currently the fastest growing group in the U.S. Because they often share similar socioeconomic characteristics with other U.S. minority groups, Hispanics are perceived of as a homogeneous group when in fact many diverse groups compose the all-inclusive category "Hispanic population of the U.S."

Bean and Tienda, whose efforts are part of the Census Monograph Series, set out to clarify the meaning of Hispanic ethnicity in the context of U.S. society today. Within this context, they examine the differences and similarities of social, demographic, and economic characteristics among the major Hispanic subgroups: the Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Central and South American-origin subpopulations.

As with many recent publications on Hispanics, this monograph also relies on 1980 Census data for its analysis. Although 1980 statistics are, as the authors point out, somewhat limiting for data users on the verge of the 1990s, these data provide the most comprehensive information available on social, economic, and demographic attributes of the Hispanic population in general and the subpopulations in particular.

Rich with tables and other statistical information, this volume has no rival as a comprehensive review, which more than compensates for the lack of fresh numbers. After defining each of the major Hispanic subpopulations, their history of immigration and assimilation into U.S. society, and the limitations of measurement over time, the book focuses on analysis of trends since the 1960s.

Chapters are organized around themes of change and persistence over time, diversity and uniformity among Hispanic subgroups, and convergence and divergence of Hispanic subgroups and non-Hispanic whites and blacks. Areas of the Hispanic population that are explored include immigration; geographical distribution; marriage, family, and household; fertility patterns; education; and labor force participation and earnings.

– Audrey Singer

WORLD POPULATION TRENDS AND POLICIES: 1987 Monitoring Report, prepared by the UN Dept. of International Economic and Social Affairs. (Population Studies No. 103) New York: United Nations, 1988. 411 pages. $47.50.

The UN's latest full monitoring report on population trends since 1983 has just been published – an important document because it provides a global, biennial review of an ongoing monitoring process that was mandated as a specialized activity of the UN in the 1974 World Population Plan of Action.

Presented within Parts I and II are: first, the results of the monitoring of population trends and policies in population growth and structure, fertility, mortality, population distribution, and migration; and second, a review of recent global trends in the area of social and economic development.

Part III explores two special topics: fertility and women's life cycle and socioeconomic differentials in mortality. The latter section reviews the trends in developing countries based on research previously published by the UN in *Socio-economic Differentials in Child Mortality in Developing Countries* (1985). It differs from and complements the previous 15-country study, which presented results variable-by-variable, by reorganizing the results on a country basis. An erudite discussion of research activities on the "social inequality of death" in developed countries follows. It reviews the research difficulties in obtaining suitable data compounded by data protection provisions which have become more prevalent in the last decade, examines current research directions, and highlights areas where the health sector is called upon to spearhead remedial action.

The fertility of women and their life cycle provide a comparative perspective on some of the demographic features of each society which affect the role of childbearing in women's lives. The topics were clearly chosen on the basis of current interest and the availability of comparative data. This is timely reading – in keeping with the goal of effectively integrating women in development that was recommended by the 1984 International Conference on Population held in Mexico City.

– Denise Dowdell

SPOTLIGHT

Togo

Population (mid-1988 est.): 3.3 million
Land area: 21,622 sq. miles
Births per 1,000 pop.: 47
Deaths per 1,000 pop.: 14
Rate of natural increase: 3.3 percent
Total fertility rate: 6.5 children per woman
Infant mortality rate: 107 infant deaths per 1,000 live births
Life expectancy at birth: 54 years
GNP per capita (1987 est.) US $300

by John F. May

The Republic of Togo, a former German colony and French protectorate about the size of West Virginia, is located on the southern coast of West Africa about 8 degrees north of the Equator. From a 32-mile-long Atlantic coastline, this small country's elongated boundaries stretch about 320 miles northward into the interior. Togo is surrounded by Ghana to the west, Benin to the east, and Burkina Faso to the north.

Over the last 20 years, Togo has enjoyed political stability under the rule of its President, Gen. Gnassingbe Eyadema, who, like most of the Togo army's personnel, is from the Kabye ethnic group in the north (the Kabye make up about 22 percent of the population). In contrast, many political leaders and the majority of civil servants come from the Ewe group in the south (who comprise about 35 percent).

Like most Sub-Saharan nations, Togo has experienced dramatic population increase in recent decades. As elsewhere in West Africa, levels of mortality, especially infant and child mortality, have declined sharply, although they still remain very high. Fertility also has remained constant or has even increased slightly due to the improved provision of health care for mothers and the loosening of traditional breastfeeding and postpartum taboo practices.

As a result, Togo is currently experiencing an acceleration of its demographic growth: At current rates, the population will double every 21 years. About 45 percent of the Togolese are aged under 15 years; even if fertility were to decline to replacement level today, the population would still double because of the large proportion of the population in the childbearing ages – a phenomenon known as the population momentum effect.

Over the past 20 years, Togo's government has been relatively successful in spurring development. The health-care system has been expanded substantially, as has the educational sector. Today, about 70 percent of primary-school-age children attend school. Unfortunately, with the economic crisis of the early 1980s, Togo is no longer able to sustain the pace of this effort. The flow of investment has largely dried up and servicing the external debt poses a major obstacle to continuing development efforts. Moreover, the population density of Togo is already fairly high by Sub-Saharan standards. Nearly a quarter of the Togolese live in urban areas, and the rapid urbanization of Lomé, the capital and largest city (with over 250,000 people), and Kara in the northern region may soon further strain scarce resources.

FAO

Togolese fishermen in Atlantic surf.

In fact, rapid population growth is more and more perceived by Togo's leaders as a major threat to the development of the country. An important conference on Population and Development was organized in Lomé in September 1987. Based on recommendations from this conference, a group of Togolese experts prepared the draft version of a national population policy statement. First steps for the implementation of the statement's recommendations are currently underway.

For Togo's government, the task ahead remains formidable. Programs to increase public awareness about the benefits of slower population growth – both at the national and the household level – need to be implemented. In addition, the effects of current population pressures have to be contended with. For example, population could be redistributed and empty land put to cultivation, although this would require enormous investments. In fact, the expansion of family planning services (the current rate of contraceptive prevalence is about 2 percent of women at risk) is an important and challenging option, one that will benefit maternal and child health.

The forthcoming results of the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) – the first nationwide survey of this nature – will soon enable researchers to better analyze the sociocultural and proximate determinants of fertility in Togo. This will in turn facilitate the adjustment of policy responses to the demographic challenge which faces the country.

John F. May, Demographer, is Coordinator of Francophone Programs at The Futures Group, Washington, D.C.